

Members

Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson
Rep. Kreg Battles
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. Phyllis Pond
Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Travis Holdman
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young



STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 10, 2009
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: The Board Room of the Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Robert Bischoff, Chairperson; Rep. William Ruppel; Rep. Phyllis Pond; Sen. James Merritt, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Travis Holdman; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Richard Young.

Members Absent: Rep. Kreg Battles.

Chairperson Bischoff called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Introductions were made of the members of the Committee, the staff of the Legislative Services Agency, and Fair staff. The staff attorney for the Committee reviewed pertinent portions of Legislative Council Resolution 09-02 and read IC 15-13-6-4 concerning the duties of the Committee.

1. Preliminary Report Regarding the 2009 Indiana State Fair.

Executive Director Cindy Hoyer gave the Committee Recap of 2009 and thoughts for the 2010 Indiana State Fair (Exhibit A). She reported that she had met with the Budget Committee in late July and those members had inspected many of the buildings at the Fair. This year the Fair dates were extended to three weekends in order to allow the 4-H members to exhibit at the Fair without missing as much school as in earlier years. It appears obvious that the economy is affecting the spending habits of the visitors at the Fair; exit surveys revealed that this year's per capita spending was \$65 and last year was \$81. There were many promotions and specials to try to increase admission numbers and many free shows. A new offering this year was "Taste of the State Fair" which enabled attendees to sample many of the food items for a lower price. The Indianapolis Star did a wonderful job of keeping the momentum of the Fair going.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

There was a "job fair" in June that increased the caliber of the part-time employees of the Fair. The Fair is working with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to spotlight countries in future years to show how partnership is important to Indiana's agriculture and economy, with next year spotlighting Japan. The Fair continues to work with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to showcase a product; in 2010 it will be the Year of the Pig. Since next year is the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts, the organization may do a legacy project at the Fairgrounds. There is a continuing debate on what the dates for the Fair might be in the future; unless county fairs are held earlier in the summer, the window of opportunity for the dates of the Fair continues to be small.

In response to a question from Rep. Ruppel, Director Hoye commented that attendance at consumer shows other than the Fair has been up 3% over last year. She gave the Committee copies of Exhibit B After Action Summary-2009 Fair. Discussion ensued regarding the renovation of the Pepsi Coliseum, built in 1939, and the 4-H buildings. The estimates for a complete renovation of the Pepsi Coliseum range from \$40-60 million dollars, and certain lesser renovation would be close to \$15 million dollars. Senator Young commended the Fairgrounds staff as to the improvements in the condition of the grounds.

2. Report from the Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage.

Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage Barn Director Justin Armstrong stated that in 2008 the Barn exceeded its goal for attendance at educational programs by 22%, including distance learning and students in its classroom. Regarding program revenue, in 2008 the proceeds were 17% above the expected amount. Staff has looked at other venues on the Fairgrounds to see how they may be utilized as teaching aids; in 2009, it used the ice rink at the Pepsi Coliseum in programming. Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett is interested in developing curriculum through The Barn for the Indiana educational system. The Wonder Trail was an activity at the Fair again this year. Last April The Barn offered instructional field trips during the Fair to teachers within 1 1/2 hours distance from the Fairgrounds; this first offering was successful with over 1200 students attending this August. Discussion ensued regarding costs to the schools and students for visits to The Barn.

Responding to Rep. Ruppel, Director Armstrong stated that a long term goal is to have a small working farm on the premises, with crops and animals common to Indiana.

In response to Senator Young, Director Armstrong replied that there were about 22,000 4-H exhibitors at the Fair; there are Future Farmers of America exhibitors, also. The exhibitors usually have to be in attendance at the Fair for 3-5 days.

Discussion then ensued about whether attendance at the Fair, both by 4-H exhibitors and the juvenile general public, should be an excused absence for purposes of mandatory school attendance. The Committee decided that no action on this topic was needed at this time as the subject of school dates will be a subject of the Interim Study Committee on Education. Senator Young suggested that one way around the mandatory school attendance requirement would be to devise an educational curriculum to be taught at the Fair that would be counted as school attendance for those days at the Fair. Chairman Bischoff wondered if each county holds a county fair; Director Hoye will research that for the Committee.

The Committee expressed interest in the funding of the Fair in light of recent changes in the statutory funding formula, which needs to be monitored to see if revisions are necessary.

The Committee discussed IC 15-13-8-3, IC 15-13-8-4, and IC 15-13-8-8, regarding the investment policies of the Indiana State Fair Commission.

Discussion on the legality of serving alcohol (IC 7.1-5-10-17) on the Fair premises during the Fair was continued until the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the next meeting date of the Committee which will be either October 26 or 27, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., at the Board Room of the Administration Building of the Fairgrounds. The date will be set at a later time. There being no further business before the Committee, Chairperson Bischoff adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.